

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-18, as amended, remain herein. Claim 2 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

1. Claims 15 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Claim 15 has been amended to moot the rejection.

2. Claims 1-7, 11, 14, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e) over Fischer '009. Fischer's U.S. filing date of July 1, 2004 fails to antedate applicants' foreign priority date of December 10, 2003. Applicants will submit a verified English language translation of the priority document as soon as their undersigned attorney receives same. Thus, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

3. Claims 8-10, 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) over Fischer '009. Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) over Fischer '009 and Cohn '761. As discussed above, these rejections are mooted in view of applicants' submission of a verified English language translation of the priority document.

4. Claims 1, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) over Suzuki Japanese Publication No. 2001356404.

Elements previously recited in canceled claim 2 have been incorporated into claims 1 and 17. The Office Action did not reject claim 2 over Suzuki '404, and thus, amended claims 1 and 17 are patentable over Suzuki '404. Claim 18 is patentable by virtue of its dependency from claim 17.

5. Claims 1, 4-7 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) over Hooker '463.

The Office Action did not reject claim 2 over Hooker '463, and thus, amended claim 1, which now incorporates elements previously recited in claim 2, is patentable over Hooker '463. Claims 4-7 and 11 are patentable by virtue of its dependency from claim 17.

6. Applicants appreciate the indication that claim 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants submit, however, that a broader scope of the invention is patentable in view of the art of record.

For all of the foregoing reasons, all claims 1 and 3-18 are now fully in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The PTO is hereby authorized to charge or credit any necessary fees to Deposit Account No. 19-4293. Should the Examiner deem that any further amendments would be desirable in placing this application in even better condition for issue, he is invited to telephone applicant's undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

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